

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 11680

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, JA

SUBJECT: USMC REDUCTIONS

1. DURING THE COURSE OF CINCPAC VISIT HERE, A NUMBER OF JAPANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND OTHERS HE SAW EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE CHANGES IN US DEPLOYMENTS, CITING THE SO-CALLED VANDER SCHAAF REPORT TO THE DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. CINCPAC FOLLOWED THE SAME GENERAL LINE WE HAVE TAKEN IN RESPONDING TO SIMILAR INQUIRIES, I.E. THAT WE WERE AWARE THE REPORT EXISTED; THAT WE WERE NOT AWARE OF ANY PLANS BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO IMPLEMENT THE REPORT WHICH AT THIS STAGE REPRESENTED ONLY THE THINKING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE OR ITS STAFF; THAT WE WERE AWARE OF NO OTHER PLANS FOR ANY SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN US DEPLOYMENTS; BUT THAT WE HOPED TO INFORM THE GOJ IN ADVANCE OF ANY CHANGES. DURING A CALL AUGUST 9, HOWEVER, LTGEN WILSON CGFMFPAC INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE USMC IS CONSIDERING SUBSTANTIAL IMMEDIATE REDUCTIONS AT CAMP BUTLER OKINAWA (REDUCTIONS INVOLVE 800 JAPANESE AND 200 AMERICAN PERSONNEL, PRECISELY AS PROPOSED BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT). THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS.

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2. ON OKINAWA ITSELF THE REDUCTIONS WILL ADD CONSIDERABLY

TO THE LABOR AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEMS WE ALREADY FACE AS A RESULT OF SUCCESSIVE REDUCTIONS IN FORCE. OUR ABILITY TO MANAGE THESE PROBLEMS, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TERM, WILL CONTINUE TO DEPEND IN PART ON OUR PROVIDING THE LONGEST POSSIBLE LEAD TIME BOTH TO THE GOJ AND THE WORKERS INVOLVED. IN THE LONGER RUN, OF COURSE, ALL SUCH REDUCTIONS TEND TO UNDERCUT OUR ECONOMIC BENEFIT ARGUMENT, WHICH WHILE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE NONETHELESS HAS HAD GOOD EFFECT AMONG MANY OF THE OKINAWAN COMMUNITY. THESE CONTINUING REDUCTIONS ADD POWERFUL FUEL TO THE ARGUMENT PUSHED BY GOVERNOR YARA AND OTHERS THAT REDUCTIONS IN FORCE MUST BE MATCHED BY EQUAL REDUCTIONS IN US FACILITIES AND AREAS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS. REDUCTION OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT BY MARINES, AND AT LEAST PARTIAL SUBSTITUTION BY AMERICAN LABOR, NATURALLY PROVOKE BAD REACTIONS, EVEN AMONG OUR FRIENDS, AND STRENGTHEN THE FORCE OF YARA'S LINE AGAINST SUCH ADJUSTMENTS FORCED ON OTHER SERVICES AS WELL.

3. PERHAPS MORE FUNDAMENTALLY SERIOUS, HOWEVER, IS THE APPARENT LINK BETWEEN THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS AND THE VANDER SCHAAF REPORT. WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE REPORT BUT UNDERSTAND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT SPECIFICALLY RECOMMENDS THE REDUCTIONS BEING CONSIDERED FOR CAMP BUTLER. IT ALSO RECOMMENDS REDUCTIONS IN KOREA AND CHANGES IN THE US FORCES COMMAND STRUCTURE IN JAPAN. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE VANDER SCHAAF REPORT HAS BEEN CARRIED IN SOME DETAIL IN THE JAPANESE PRESS. SOME WILL INEVITABLY BE LED TO CONCLUDE THAT THE CAMP BUTLER REDUCTIONS ARE BUT PRELUDE TO FULLER IMPLEMENTATION OF MOST OR ALL THE VANDER SCHAAF RECOMMENDATIONS. SUCH SPECULATION HERE ABOUT SUDDEN AND APPARENTLY UNPLANNED CHANGES IN US POSTURE WILL ADD TO CONCERN ABOUT THE CREDIBILITY OF US DEFENSE COMMITMENTS AND PLANNING AS WELL AS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF US-JAPAN CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS. SUCH SPECULATION MAY ALSO RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF COMUSJ AND YOKOTA AIR BASE WITH SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR RELOCATION PLANS.

4. ASSUMING REDUCTIONS SOMETHING LIKE THOSE DESCRIBED BY LTGEN WILSON ARE UNAVOIDABLE, THE FOLLOWING WILL BE NEEDED TO MINIMIZE THE ADVERSE IMPACT:

(A) ADEQUATE LEAD TIME TO INFORM GOJ, FIRST, AND THEN WORKERS INVOLVED. ANYTHING LESS THAN NINETY DAY NOTICE TO WORKERS WILL
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SERIOUSLY WORSEN REACTION, AND WE OUGHT TO HAVE TIME BEFORE THAT TO TALK WITH GOJ.

(B) A CONVINCING RATIONALE FOR CHANGES AND AN EXPLANATION OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO VANDER SCHAAF REPORT. (OUR PROBLEMS WILL BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT IF WE CONFRONT GOJ WITH SERIES OF INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS APPARENTLY RESPONDING TO THIS REPORT). IF POSSIBLE, DEVISE SOME METHOD OF BREAKING THE APPARENT LINK BETWEEN THE

PROPOSED REDUCTIONS AND THE VANDER SCHAAF REPORT, E.G., A CHANGE
IN THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED OR THE UNITS AFFECTED.
HODGSON

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